

A fresh coat of paint can liven up a room or drab exterior like nothing else. But, did you ever stop to think about the negative impact that the improper disposal of paint and paint related products has on our environment?

Paint contains chemicals, such as solvents and metals that can damage the environment, especially our waterways, if disposed of improperly. Improper disposal is also a threat to not only wildlife but also humans.

So, the next time you're faced with the daunting task of cleaning those brushes or ridding your home of cluttered paint cans, take the time to do it right and protect our area waterways by adhering to a few simple guidelines.

Latex or Oil-Based Paint?

Whenever possible, purchase latex or other water-based paints rather than oil-based products. Latex paint is not considered hazardous and is less harmful to the environment. It also cleans up easily with soap and water.

Oil-based paints, on the other hand, contain solvents that can contaminate water. In addition, they are flammable and require paint thinner or other solvents to clean up.

All in all, working with latex is much easier than oil-based paint and there is considerably less cleanup involved.

Don't Forget to Measure First

Take the time to measure the area you are painting to determine just how much paint you're going to need for the project. Typically, a gallon of paint will cover approximately 350 square feet. This, of course, depends on a few other factors such as the brand of paint being used and the type of surface being painted but it's a relatively accurate gauge to go by.

By measuring first, you will not only avoid the task of disposing of unwanted paint but just may save some money in the process.



Paint Alternatives

Although not easily found, there are a number of organic paints on the market. These paints are made from organic materials like citrus peel oil and solvents; tree resin; earthen pigments; bee and tree waxes and they are good alternatives not only for environmental reasons but also for those who may have chemical sensitivities to traditional paints. Unfortunately, their availability could pose a problem so

expect to put forth a little effort.

There are also a number of companies now recycling paint. Colors are somewhat limited when recycling but the quality is comparable to new paint. Unfortunately, as is the case with organic paints, finding a dealer could pose a problem. Fortunately, modern technology, namely the internet, has made the search a lot easier and may well be worth the effort.

Disposing of Unwanted Paint

- ◆ Latex paint may be disposed of in the trash but only after it has been properly dried out. It can also be poured down a drain that leads to the sanitary sewer although this is still not the best method of disposal. Oil-based paints, thinners, turpentine, mineral spirits, stains and varnishes should never be poured down any drain.
- ◆ Secure the lid tightly and keep leftover paint to be used for touch-up as needed. Store the can upside down and it will create a seal around the rim and keep the paint fresh.
- ◆ Ask friends and neighbors if they may be in need of your leftover paint. It may be just what they need for their latest project. You might also try donating the paint to a community or religious organization.

Drying Out Your Unwanted Paint

- ♦ Choose a well-ventilated area away from flames, pets, children or expectant mothers. Paint fumes can be toxic and should be treated as such.
- ♦ To dry small quantities (less than half an inch in the bottom of the can), simply remove the lid and allow the liquid portion to evaporate.
- ♦ To dry large quantities, pour paint in thin layers (about a half an inch or less) onto a large sheet of plastic or cardboard. Let this dry and repeat the process until all of the paint has been dried. It may take a week or so to completely dry. When dry, it may be taken to the landfill or disposed of in the trash.
- ♦ Only completely dry, hardened paint can be put in the trash. Leave the lid off when you place the cans at the curb or when you carry them to the landfill so workers will know that there's dried paint inside.
- ♦ Aerosol paint can be sprayed on cardboard and left to dry. Once dry, it can be disposed of in the trash along with the empty can.



CITY OF BEAUMONT STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

For more information, contact:
City of Beaumont
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(409) 880-3725

Paint Disposal

*A Guide to the Proper Disposal of
Paint and Paint Related Products*

